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STATINTL

Senator Retreats In CIA Hassle

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WASHINGTON—The Central Intelligence Agency and the State Department were thrown into an uproar Wednesday when a news dispatch reported Sen. Stephen M. Young (D-Ohio) as saying he had been told the CIA had "committed" atrocities in Viet Nam designed to discredit the Viet Cong.

But the 76-year-old Ohioan later declared, "I did not say that."

His earlier purported statement elicited an immediate denial from the usually silent CIA—"absolutely false," a spokesman protested—and deep anguish among State Department officials, who feared his reported remarks would have disastrous repercussions abroad.

Those reactions stemmed from a news-agency dispatch quoting Young, recently returned from a trip to Viet Nam, as saying a CIA agent there told him the CIA committed atrocities there to underscore the Viet Cong guerrillas' reputation for cruelty.

Asked about the report, Young modified it considerably. He said that "a man who claimed to be working for the CIA" in Viet Nam alleged the intelligence agency had hired some South Vietnamese to masquerade as Viet Cong. Young added:

"It was alleged to me that several of these executed two village leaders and raped some women."

He said he exclaimed "I can't believe that!" when the purported CIA agent told him of the alleged atrocities.

And he said on returning to Washington from South Viet Nam he had asked the CIA about the purported incident and had been told the intelligence agency "would not sanction that."

"CIA has employed some South Vietnamese, and they have been instructed to claim they are Viet Cong and to work accordingly," the senator said. "But, of course, no one could tell me any American instructed anyone to perpetrate outrages."

Several State Department officials bewailed the senator's reported earlier remarks as irresponsible and predicted they would be brandished by Communists around the world as evidence that the United States is engaging in atrocities in Viet Nam.

Rep. Cornelius E. Gallagher (D-N.J.) said Young's earlier purported statement was "appalling and reflects a carelessness with facts."